

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-03

SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-03 FEA-01 SAJ-01 IO-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, IS

SUBJ: ISRAELI OIL EXPLORATION

REF: TEL AVIV 0589

1. IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFF ON JULY 21, MENACHEM CHEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ISRAEL INSTITUTE OF PETROLEUM AND ENERGY, SAID THAT ISRAEL INTENDS TO CONTINUE EXPLORATIONS FOR OIL AT AT TUR, NINETY KILOMETERS NORTH OF SHARM ASH SHAYKH ON LOWER WESTERN EDGE OF SINAI PENINSULA. CHEN SAID THAT SEVERAL DRY HOLES HAD ALREADY BEEN DRILLED AT AT TUR, BUT THAT ISRAELIS ARE CONFIDENT OF FINDING OIL THERE. DRILLINGS AT AT TUR WOULD BE CONDUCTED BOTH ONSHORE AND OFFSHORE IN THE GULF OF SUEZ.

2. REGARDING FUTURE PETROLEUM EXPLORATION PLANS, CHEN SAID ALTHOUGH WIDE-RANGING AND EXTENSIVE DRILLING THROUGHOUT ISRAEL IN PAST HAD YIELDED THUS FAR ONLY FAINT TRACES OF OIL AND GAS, ISRAEL WILL PERFORM BETWEEN
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100 AND 200 ADDITIONAL DRILLINGS OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS.

NEW DEEP-DRILLING EQUIPMENT FROM UNITED STATES CAPABLE OF REACHING DEPTHS OF 6,000 METERS IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN DECEMBER 1975 AND TO GO INTO OPERATION BY FEBRUARY 1976. ASKED ABOUT EXPLORATION SITES, CHEN MENTIONED REVIVIM, HALUZA, GEDERA, PETAH TIKVA, REHOVOT, AND OFFSHORE BETWEEN ACCO AND CAESAREA, ALL OF WHICH LIE WITH QUOTE GREEN LINE UNQUOTE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT, APART FROM AT TUR AREA, EXPLORATION WAS TO BE CONCENTRATED WITHIN ISRAEL'S PRE-1967 BORDERS. (WHEN ASKED ABOUT CURRENT DRILLING AT RAMALLAH ON WEST BANK, HE DECLINED DIRECT RESPONSE AND STRESSED AGAIN THAT MAIN EFFORT WOULD BE WITHIN PRE-67 BORDERS) ISRAEL WILL SPEND 200 MILLION POUNDS IN 1975 AND 1976 (\$32.6 MILLION) FOR EXPLORATIONS, AND OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS COULD SPEND UP TO ONE BILLION POUNDS (\$163.3 MILLION). IF THESE AMBITIOUS EXPLORATIONS PLANS DO NOT YIELD USABLE DEPOSITS, CHEN SAID, THEN HE WOULD BE FORCED TO CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS NO OIL IN ISRAEL.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SUBTERRANEAN GEOLOGIC FORMATIONS ARE SIMILAR TO OIL-BEARING FORMATIONS ELSEWHERE IN MIDDLE EAST, WIDESPREAD DRILLING THUS FAR HAS PRODUCED NOTHING WORTHWHILE. HOWEVER, MAJOR SOURCE OF INDIGENOUS OIL WOULD BE OF SUCH VALUE MILITARILY AND ECONOMICALLY TO ISRAEL THAT FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM DESCRIBED ABOVE WOULD BE CHEAP IF EXPLORATION IS SUCCESSFUL.
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